

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

*The best way to make children good is to make them happy.*  
—Oscar Wilde

## Nab the defaulters

The police have been time and again saying that they are clamping down on erring taxi drivers who are swindling passengers. The public have been raising their voices about the cheating and the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD) sometimes swings into action and arrests and books some culprits. But with the passage of time the traffic police let down their vigilance as a result of which the defaulting drivers are able to continue with the cheating as there is nobody taking an interest in stopping them from their nefarious acts. So there is a certain amount of optimism now that the MTPD together with the Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) have joined hands and are taking joint action to deal with the cheating that is going on by some scrupulous cabbies. This latest campaign to nab the offending taxi drivers was initiated from January 13 and in that time 176 taxi drivers have been booked for cheating. About 50 per cent of the offence was for tampering with the meters. It is clear to all that many taxi drivers tamper with their meter and the reading for the same distance differ from taxi to taxi pointing to foul play. Unfortunately, the passengers can do little but complain and dish out the amount as displayed in the taxi meter by way of fare.

This calls for constant vigil on the part of the authorities and the NBSM should check all the taxi meters periodically so that the meters give the correct readings. Those found tampering with the meters should receive stern punishment. Merely leaving them alone with a warning is not enough. The arrested cabbies are booked under the Vehicle and Transportation Act 1993. The

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punishment meted out under the Act appears to be lenient and the offenders are let off easily. It is high time that the Act was reviewed and provisions made for stricter punishment, including putting the repeat offenders behind bars instead of merely booking them only if they repeat the offence. This would serve as a powerful deterrent against crimes such as tampering with the taxi meter or charging more than what is shown in the meter. Besides, it should be made mandatory to have the meter on while commuting. These days it is found that many commuters bargain with the taxi drivers and fix a rate to commute to a certain distance. The fear of punishment should always be greater than the possibility of getting away with more earnings.

Some taxi drivers are deliberately making their meter dysfunctional with the expectation that they would not be booked for tampering with the meter. The traffic police should be fully aware that this is a common practice to cheat passengers, and the meters should be inspected by the NBSM to see as to whether they have been tampered with. The government authorities reposed with the task of making commuting without hassles should be alert around the clock. They should make surprise checks again and again until the defaulting taxi drivers realize that it is futile to tamper with their meter and cheat their passengers in other manners as well. Thus, the news that the concerned government bodies are conducting a campaign against erring taxi drivers should be welcomed and at the same time the public should cooperate in the endeavour by reporting such crimes when they see them.

## Fuel shortages

There seems no getting away from the perennial scarcity of petrol products. This hits the consumers hard and even when the fuel is available they have to stay in long queues to get their quota. The scarcity of fuel has been hitting the economy hard besides harassing the consumers. The shortages of fuel are attributed to one reason or the other, this time around ostensibly because an empty tanker exploded near Barauni depot of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on January 14. After this episode there was a short supply of petrol and diesel from the IOC, the sole supplier of fuel to the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). Given the fallout of scarcity of fuel it would be advisable for NOC to be fully prepared for such contingencies. Instead of providing various excuses for the shortfall of supply of petrol and diesel to the consumers, it should keep adequate stocks of petroleum products to meet immediate needs.

MANA PRASAD WAGLEY

These days there are mushrooming growth of entrance preparation classes in Nepal. One can see these institutions running in different locations. The advertisement of these institutions is heavy in the media. Students aspiring to join selected colleges rush to these institutions to get prepared. Parents too seem very much worried about their children's future, thus, they look for genuine institutions for entrance preparation. Basically the entrance preparations for medical, engineering and management classes remain busy with a greater number of students. Isn't this great that entrance preparation classes offer their services to the students making them able to compete with others and getting admissions? Obviously, it is. However, one should also know the other side of the coin of these institutions. They not only sell knowledge, but they also sell students. In today's market, there is also a mushrooming growth of colleges in the urban areas. Each college has a hard time motivating students to their premises. Even famous colleges in the past are now in trouble because of the low number of

enrollments. Taking advantage of this situation, the entrance preparation institutions make an agreement with the colleges to supply the required number of students as required. They charge Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 25,000 per student depending upon the nature of the subject areas. Now many big colleges in Kathmandu buy students from the entrance preparation institutions to promote their business. This has been one reason why the tuition fee is high in colleges these days. What a wonderful idea? Both the entrance preparation institutions and the colleges survive in a win-win situation. What about the parents? They are exploited in the name of entrance preparation and are also compelled to pay hefty fee to colleges. On the other hand, the entrance preparation institutions earn by two ways: one from the tuition fee for the entrance preparation and two by selling the students in colleges. The second one is dangerous because it is not recorded in the income of the institution, rather the proprietor makes it as his/her personal income. How do they do this? Or how do they defy the students and colleges?

They first hunt the talented students who are admit-



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ted to their institutions. They know that those students get admissions easily getting through the entrance examinations in colleges of their choices. So they do not want them to go directly to the entrance examinations. They tell the students not to worry about admissions, on one hand, and bargain and compromise the prices per student with colleges on the other

hand. Students always are worried about admissions and the colleges always worry about student enrollment. These "worry factors" have been well cashed by the entrance preparation institutions. In this way, the entrance preparation institutions prepare a "student selling plan" and channel the students to those colleges where they have agreements. For weaker stu-

dents they sell as they wish.

Should entrance preparation institutions arrange visits of students to different colleges? One can see these institutions arranging visits of students to different colleges. This is what smells the rat. Then, the proprietors rush to concerned colleges and bargain prices per student.

The question here is not who earned how much. The major concern is the buying and selling of students. There was a time when colleges paid hefty amounts to universities to get affiliation. Now they are paying entrance preparation institutions to buy students to run their classes. Then what are these colleges for? Are they academic institutions? If they were, they could have demonstrated their capability in such a way that instead of going to entrance preparation classes the students would have come to them directly. If they were purely academic they would deny buying students from other institution. This also raises questions of ethics: ethics on the part of entrance preparation institutions and ethics of the colleges. Then how can parents believe that their students are getting good education from these unethical institutions?

Is there any role of the regulating authority here? Or are they also fooled? Or are they provided certain incentives out of the earnings made by the institutions? Otherwise why are not they taking any actions? It is the Ministry of Education that should keep accounts of all these type of academic service institutions no matter where they are registered. There is also doubt whether all entrance preparation classes are registered legally. How many of these pay income tax to the government? In the absence of monitoring mechanism, this pathetic business has been continuing without any limit. Whatever the case, selling students is a crime and buying them is more critical than that. These buying and selling humans for the purpose of education are intolerable. The government, especially the Ministry of Education, should move its step forward to investigate into the matter and punish both buyers and sellers of students. Equally important is that the registering agency should monitor them whether they are doing the right type of job. Students should not be made victims in this 'tug of war' of admission.

*Dr. Wagley is Educationist*

### TOPICS

KAUSHAL GHIMIRE

Not anymore is the world divided between the Anglophiles and the Anglophobes. Those who admire the Anglo-Saxon culture or at least the linguistic part of it and those who hate it, no longer form the opposite poles. Also, due to the development of concepts like communism, nationalism, regionalism, and anti-imperialism, it is seemingly getting harder to find Anglophiles around, except in the subcontinent that is.

I have always considered myself to be a sub-continental man. First I belong to the Indian subcontinent and only then to Nepal. I love everything about the subcontinent: the samosas,

Bollywood movies, gazals, briyani and love for the game of cricket. Sub-continental people do share a lot of similarities: the brown complexion, political instability, corruption and of course the love of the English language.

Anglophiles, yes sir. They still do exist, we are the living examples of it. Our concept of Anglophilia, however, is slightly different. More than the culture or people of England or any other Anglophonic country, we love their language. Anyone having even the most mediocre of verbal English is considered an Einstein here.

Back in my schooling days, if a bloke spoke in any other language than English, he would be

fine five rupees. Though the punishment was trivial: it does, nevertheless, demonstrates our affection towards the English language. Good verbal English has always been an important attribute in a desirable personality. There is nothing good or bad about loving a language. But the thing that never ceases to amaze me is the level of aspiration we have for it. Our love for the English language is simply the most fascinating thing in the world linguistics today. I cannot think of any culture or region doing the same. It is very difficult for a personage, without a good spoken English, to be considered for a mentorship or to be regarded highly. Any speech delivered in English will be much more per-

suasive, descriptive, appreciative and effective, than the ones delivered in any other language. Obama wouldn't have been that admirably potent to the sub-continental audience if he was not an Anglophone, same goes to most of the world leaders. We here in the sub-continent are least concerned by your views and ideas, all we want; is to hear you speaking. There may be a few, especially the nationalist and the regionalist, who may find this article full of simplistic generalizations, but they themselves are in a clear-cut minority. And the world knows how we, here in the subcontinent, treat the minorities. Ask the Dalits, Rohingyas, and Ahmadiyyas, they will give you the answer.

### BLOG SURF

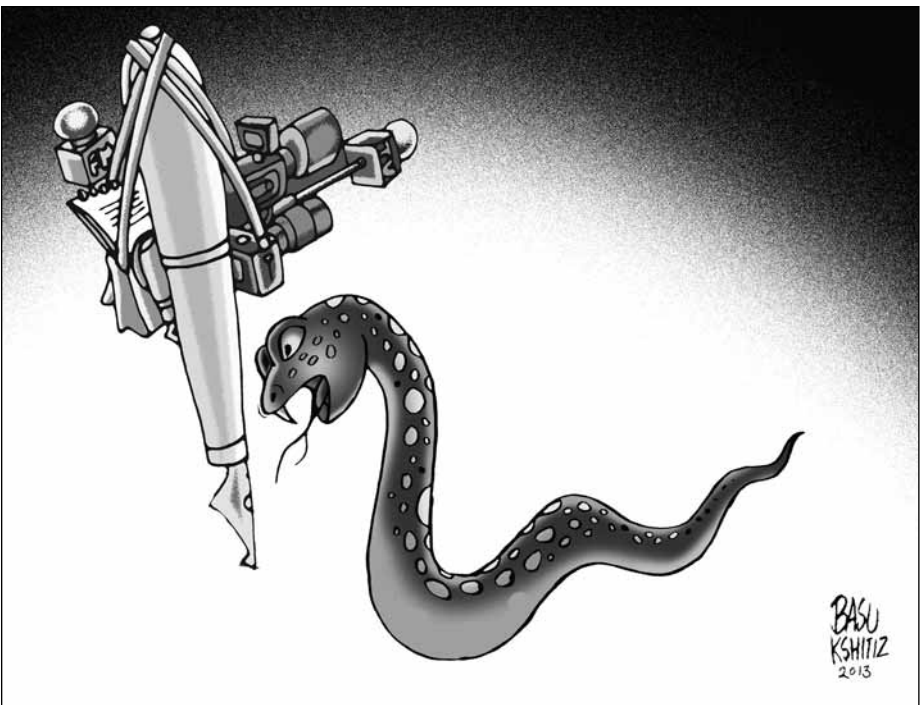
#### How the bus trundles

MEGAN TITELY

I spent a day waiting. Waiting for the bus to arrive. Waiting for it to leave. I would spend a night waiting for it to arrive back in Kathmandu. I reached the bus park with time enough to have my seat changed to the front of the bus, by a window; the best seat. I didn't ask for it but I'm not complaining. Having handed my bag over to the bus conductor and after watching it reach the roof in safety, I scouted out a place to eat.

"Ke Paynchha?" (What is available?) A coke and Momos. Yes please. I am shooed to the back of the restaurant to park up on a bench. By the time the Momos arrive I have been looked over by everyone in the place and a family is arguing loudly in Nepali about what they should say to me and, more importantly, who should say it. With the curious waiters coming round every so often to look at me, the numerous sets of eyes lingering on my face and the attention I was getting from the raucous family I couldn't suppress my laughter. —meganitley.blogspot.com

### CARTOON



## KMC's focus environment, says chief

Himalayan News Service

Kathmandu, January 21, 2003

Chief executive officer of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City Shiva Bhakta Sharma today said that the focus of the new budget was on managing slaughter houses and building crematoriums to improve the environment of the metropolis. "There are 2800 slaughter houses in the valley and not a single slaughter house is properly managed," said Sharma. He said that unless the slaughter houses of the valley were properly managed, the city would not be away from rampant environmental hazards. Sharma said: "We will build enough crematoriums so that the last rites of people from different castes and creeds can be performed well," he informed. Speaking at an interaction organised by the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), Kathmandu Chapter, to discuss the recently announced budget of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Sharma informed that the KMC will focus on programmes that is meant for improving environment. He also claimed that the metropolis will find a permanent dumping site. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City will try hard to ban 20 micro plastic industries which produce plastic shopping bags, he said.

## National HR Action Plan's draft formulated

Himalayan News Service

Kathmandu, January 21, 2003

A draft of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) has been prepared with a view to improve human rights conditions in Nepal. The NHRAP prepared jointly by the government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will be presented to the cabinet following the next consultation meeting. The action plan will come into force from March following approval by the cabinet. The NHRAP will also be integrated in the Tenth Five Year Plan. The NHRAP is said to assist in screening and promoting the present situation of human rights in the fields related to women, children, oppressed, nationalities, education, health, development and environment. With the implementation of the NHRAP, Nepal will be the first country in South Asia to adopt such action plan for human rights protection. "The NHRAP is a follow-up of the UN world conference on human rights in Vienna in 1993, which called the governments of all states to develop national plans of action identifying steps whereby the states would improve the promotion and protection of human rights," said Tirtha Man Shakya, consultant of the UNDP's project National Human Rights Action Plan Nepal (NHRAP Nepal). Speaking at the "First national consultation" programme organised by the NHRAP Nepal here today, he said, "The NHRAP aims to address all rights."

### LETTERS

#### Darkest capital

There is no denying that Kathmandu has become the darkest capital in the planet. Electricity has become as elusive and precious as anything. The NEA has just flashed out a new schedule of dark hours without shame backed by the same old lame excuses. The main problem is people who are at helm and who are supposed to solve these malfunctions are themselves oblivious of the sufferings of the people as their abode never taste such scarcity. I too wondered sometimes: isn't there any Champion or say electricity expert or whoever that might be who can come up with an operable plan to ward off this pitiful case? Our leaders

who are already being honoured with slaps and punches have just announced yesterday another round of revolt (joke of the month) to topple the government with obvious intention of getting a pass to enter Baluwater without care of the citizens' predicament, much less loadshedding. The whole country has gone haywire with the lack of electricity and gone are the days when students reading in candle light were declared future presidents; it's a way of life. It seems the rivers of Nepal will flow in its own pace just like it has from ancient times with mighty rolling currents while making jokes at people of this land for not realizing so valuable a asset just in their pocket and spending time fighting in bauble matters sporting greed

and corruption.

*Alias Nepali, via e-mail*

#### Shock

While we were on a tourist trip to visit few places in Nepal last week, we stepped into the Manakamana temple, which is located on top of a hill. It came to our shock, when we saw people who almost were on a spree of purchasing animals, hens and goats mostly, to sacrifice for the temple's presiding deity, Devi. As you know, this is a customary practice in Manakamana temple. Post sacrifice, we have seen these visitors carrying the beheaded dead bodies. What's more ridiculous is that, as you are probably aware, since this temple is located at a very high altitude and is far



away from the base where the shops are located and where the roads are, these animals are transported in an open cable car that vertically spans up to an altitude of 1302 meters. While people are transported in a much safer cable cars, this journey, may be gruesome to these animals that travel in an open top metal made cable car, mainly due to fear inflicted upon them due to heights and

due to the cold weather that persists at this location, especially during winter times. I am not sure how you deal with situations where there is a connect between animal torture and mundane religious practices. Your thoughts will be very helpful on how to deal with this situation.

*Krishna/Manjunath, BTM Layout, Bangalore - 560076*

#### Shangri La

The enchanting pictures of Ramaroshan Lake in Achham and of snowfall at Porakhe, Bajura (THT, Jan. 19, Pages 1, 6) show that the western part of our country holds as much, if not more, potentials for tourism as Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan. It is time that our tourism planners and managers look out to the mid and far western regions for the next big push. The government should come up with massive promotion and incentives for tourism in these regions.

*J Talchabhadell, Bhaktapur*

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